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SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. SOVIETS SEEK DISCUSSION ON MASS DESTRUCTION WEAPONS

ROLAND TIMERBAYEV, SOVIET MFA DEPUTY CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ASKED EMBASSY MOSCOW WHETHER THE US MIGHT DISPATCH AN EXPERT TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT SUMMER SESSION TO DISCUSS THE DEFINITION ISSUE IN CONNECTION WITH THE SOVIET PROPOSAL ON NEW MASS DESTRUCTION WEAPONS (MDW). TIMERBAYEV:

--SAID THE USSR IS READY TO ACCEPT ANY FORUM FOR CONSULTATIONS, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO START THE DISCUSSIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; AND

--CONTENDED THAT AGREEMENT TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON A
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COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN "WOULD BE A VERY GOOD POLITICAL

GESTURE" HELPFUL TO BILATERAL RELATIONS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: TIMERBAYEV'S PRESENTATION TO US WAS INFORMAL AND WE DOUBT HE EXPECTS A FORMAL REPLY. WE EXPECT HIM TO CONTINUE TO PRESS US ON THE MDW QUESTION, HOWEVER, AND WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS. (CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 8220 (EXDIS), 5/24.)

2. EGYPT-SYRIA

A. POSTPONED MEETING LEAVES SAUDIS RED-FACED

AMBASSADOR PORTER MET MAY 24 WITH SAUDI MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR MANSOURI TO DISCUSS THE RECENTLY ABORTED MEETING BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN PRIME MINISTERS IN RIYADH. ACCORDING TO MANSOURI:

--THE PROBLEM REMAINS AS IT WAS WHEN THE MEETING WAS POSTPONED, I.E., WHETHER SINAI II SHOULD BE DISCUSSED.

--THE POSTPONEMENT INVOLVED A LOSS OF FACE FOR SAUDI ARABIA, AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER IF THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD SETTLED THE PROBLEM BEFORE BEING ASKED TO COME TO RIYADH.

MANSOURI DID NOT REFLECT MUCH OPTIMISM, BUT SAID PRINCE SAUD WOULD DO ALL POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE PARTIES CONVENE AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED.

B. DID QADHAFI ACT BEHIND THE SCENES?

EMBASSY TRIPOLI BELIEVES IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT SYRIA POSTPONED THE MEETING OF RECONCILIATION WITH EGYPT IN RIYADH AFTER LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER JALLUD PAID A VISIT TO DAMASCUS. THE EMBASSY COMMENTS THAT JALLUD:

--POSSIBLY DEMANDED POSTPONEMENT AS THE PRICE FOR LIBYAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE; AND

--MAY HAVE HELPED SYRIAN, IRAQI AND PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISTS CONSOLIDATE THEIR POSITION ON THE LEBANESE CRISIS. (CONFIDENTIAL) JIDDA 3674 AND TRIPOLI 722, 5/24.)

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3. ITALY: POSSIBLE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION DOMINATES CAMPAIGN

EMBASSY ROME REPORTS THAT ITALIAN POLITICAL LEADERS USED

THE FIRST WEEKEND OF THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD TO PUBLICIZE THEIR STANDS ON THE MAJOR ISSUES, PARTICULARLY THE QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT.

--PREMIER MORO CALLED THE SITUATION A "CROSSROADS" AND STRESSED THAT ONLY ELECTORAL SUCCESS BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) CAN PROVIDE THE POLITICAL STABILITY NECESSARY TO SOLVE ITALY'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

--ALTHOUGH SPEECHES BY SOCIALISTS HAVE NOT SPECIFICALLY RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOCIALIST (PSI) PARTICIPATION IN ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT WHICH EXCLUDES THE COMMUNISTS, THE PSI EMPHASIZES THAT IT WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH THE DC ON THE BASIS OF ANY A PRIORI REJECTION OF A COMMUNIST ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

--AMONG THE MINOR PARTIES, THE LIBERALS FIRMLY OPPOSE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION. THE REPUBLICANS DENY THAT THEY WILL PARTICIPATE IN A COMMUNIST-SOCIALIST LEFTIST GOVERNMENT BUT LEAVE REPUBLICAN OPTIONS OPEN TO THE QUESTION OF POSSIBLE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A FUTURE COALITION.

EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE POLARIZATION OF THE CAMPAIGN AROUND THE COMMUNIST QUESTION SHOULD FAVOR THE DC, THE COMMUNISTS ARE WAY AHEAD OF THEM IN CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION. MANY DC SOURCES LAMENT THEIR LACK OF PERSONNEL, FUNDS AND CENTRAL DIRECTION. (CONFIDENTIAL) ROME 8461, 5/24.) SISCO

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